

HIST 651: GRADUATE READING SEMINAR
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY IN THE 20TH CENTURY
Fall 2023

Tuesdays 3:00 – 5:50
University Hall 319

Instructor:	Cornelius L. Bynum, Ph.D.	Office:	BRNG 6168
Email:	bynum@purdue.edu	Office Hours:	By appointment

Course Description:

This reading seminar will introduce students to representative readings on African American history in the twentieth century. It begins with African American in the Progressive Era that shaped uplift and civil rights organizations like the National Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and continues through the post-civil rights development of black conservatism in the 1970s especially. The course readings are not a comprehensive or exhaustive historiographical survey. Instead, this collection of studies serve to focus attention on key themes, events, individuals, and shifts that define both the period and the scholarship on African American history in the twentieth century.

Assigned Book List:

Beth Thompson Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America, 1925 – 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001) ISBN: 978-0807849293.

Davarian Baldwin and Minkah Makalani, eds., *Escape from New York: The New Negro Renaissance Beyond Harlem* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013) ISBN: 978-0816677399.

Joshua Bloom and Waldo Martin, Jr., *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1st edition, 2016) ISBN: 978-0520293281.

Gary Dorrien, *The New Abolition: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Black Social Gospel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015) ISBN: 978-0300230598.

James Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migration of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005) ISBN: 978-0807856512.

Lance Hill, *The Deacons for Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, new edition, 2006) ISBN: 978-0807857021.

William Powell Jones, *The Tribe of Black Ulysses: African American Lumber Workers in the Jim Crow South* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005) ISBN: 978-0252072291.

Michael J. Klarman, *From Jim Crow to Civil Rights: The Supreme Court and the Struggle for Racial Equality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) ISBN: 978-0195310184.

Genna Rae McNeil, *Groundwork: Charles Hamilton Houston and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984) ISBN: 978-0812211795.

Cedrick Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2nd ed., 2000) ISBN: 978-0807848296.

Frank Rosengarten, *Urbane Revolutionary: C. L. R. James and the Struggle for a New Society* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, reprint, 2010) ISBN: 978-1604735376.

Patricia A. Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001) ISBN: 978-0807849651.

Chad L. Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013) ISBN: 978-1469609850.

Assignments:

The assignments for this course are straightforward. Students will write three (3) synthetic essays drawing on the assigned course readings (10-12 pages ea.), lead at least one (1) class discussion, and participate fully in weekly class discussions.

The synthetic essays should address thematic and/or historiographic commonalities and contestations between the various readings. They should cogently dissect the theses, arguments, and evidence of each work and construct an effective presentation of students' views of the issues raised in the readings. Each paper will comprise twenty percent (20%) of a student's overall course grade.

Each student will be responsible for leading at least one (1) class discussion. Students will be expected to take 15-20 minutes at the beginning of class to briefly summarize the main text for the week, situate it historiographically, and set parameters for class discussion by outlining core themes/questions the book addresses and drawing connections to other course readings. Class leaders will also be responsible for developing a set of discussion questions on the week's reading for jump starting the class conversation. Leading class discussion will comprise twenty percent (20%) of a student's overall grade.

Lastly, class participation will comprise the final twenty percent (20%) of a student's overall grade. Participation is measured by the quality of contribution to the class' weekly discussion, not simply by frequency or volume. Finally, criticism here need not be negative; if you like a reading, explain your point of view according to scholarly criteria.

Course Requirements and Expectations:

The course requirements and expectations are simple. Weekly attendance is mandatory (this should be understood, but I state it here nonetheless). I expect active and full participation from each student each week. This means completing the reading on time, framing discussion questions for class even when not leading the class discussion, and engaging in lively, but always, respectful discussion/debate of the course readings. Your written work should be proofread before being turned in to me; if you can't be bother to self-check your work, I can't be bothered to grade it. Your essays should follow standard formats (12 pt. font; 1" margins; double-spaced with numbered pages).

Syllabus:

Week One

Tuesday, August 22, 2023

Course Introduction and Overview

Week Two

I. African Americans in the Progressive Era, 1890 – 1920

Tuesday, August 29, 2023

Assigned Reading:

Patricia A. Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

Favors, Jelani M. "Race Women: New Negro Politics and the Flowering of Radicalism at Bennett College, 1900–1945." *The North Carolina Historical Review* 94, no. 4 (2017): 391–430.

Discussion Leader(s):

Week Three

Tuesday, September 5, 2023

Assigned Reading:

Gary Dorrien, *The New Abolition: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Black Social Gospel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

Axel R. Schafer, "W. E. B. Du Bois, German Social Thought, and the Racial Divide in American Progressivism, 1892-1909," *Journal of American History* 88, no. 3 (2001): 925-49.

Discussion Leader(s):

II. African Americans in the New Negro Era, 1920s – 1930s

Week Four

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

Assigned Reading:

James Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migration of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

Field, Kendra T. "“No Such Thing as Stand Still”: Migration and Geopolitics in African American History." *The Journal of American History* 102, no. 3 (2015): 693–718.

Discussion Leader(s):

Week Five

Tuesday, September 19, 2023

Assigned Reading:

Davarian Baldwin and Minkah Makalani, eds., *Escape from New York: The New Negro Renaissance Beyond Harlem* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013)

Moses, Wilson J. "The Lost World of the Negro, 1895-1919: Black Literary and Intellectual Life before the "Renaissance"." *Black American Literature Forum* 21, no. 1/2 (1987): 61-84.

Discussion Leader(s):

Week Six

Tuesday, September 26, 2023

Assigned Reading:

Chad L. Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

Browder, Dorothea. "Working Out Their Economic Problems Together: Word War I, Working Women, and Civil Rights in the YWCA." *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 14, no. 2 (2015): 243–65.

Discussion Leader(s):

IV. Civil Rights in the Courts

Week Seven

Tuesday, October 3, 2023

Assigned Reading:

Michael J. Klarman, *From Jim Crow to Civil Rights: The Supreme Court and the Struggle for Racial Equality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

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Discussion Leader(s):

Week Eight

Tuesday, October 10, 2023

Fall Break (No Classes)

Week Nine

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

Assigned Reading:

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V. African Americans and the American Labor Movement

Week Ten

Tuesday, October 24, 2023.

Assigned Reading:

Beth Thompson Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America, 1925 – 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

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Discussion Leader(s):

Week Eleven

Tuesday, October 31, 2023

Assigned Reading:

William Powell Jones, *The Tribe of Black Ulysses: African American Lumber Workers in the Jim Crow South* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005).

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Discussion Leader(s):

VI. The Black Radical Tradition

Week Twelve

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Assigned Reading:

Cedrick Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2nd ed., 2000).

Lashawn Harris, "Marvel Cooke: Investigative Journalist, Communist and Black Radical Subject." *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 6, no. 2 (2012): 91-126

Discussion Leader(s):

Week Thirteen

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Assigned Reading:

Frank Rosengarten, *Urbane Revolutionary: C. L. R. James and the Struggle for a New Society* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, reprint, 2010).

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Discussion Leader(s):

VII. Black Power

Week Fourteen

Tuesday, November 21, 2023

Assigned Reading:

Hasan Kwame Jeffries, *Blood Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

Goldstein, Brian D. "'The Search for New Forms': Black Power and the Making of the Postmodern City." *The Journal of American History* 103, no. 2 (2016): 375–99.

Discussion Leader(s):

Week Fifteen

Tuesday, November 28, 2023

Assigned Reading:

Lance Hill, *The Deacons of Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

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Discussion Leader(s):

Week Sixteen

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

Assigned Reading:

Joshua Bloom and Waldo Martin, Jr., *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

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Discussion Leader(s):